

Indigenous

Eng: *Buffalo thorn*

Tg: *Gaba-harmaz*

Tr: *Hal-kus r a*

- Ecology:** A thorny shrub or tree widespread in dry tropical Africa and growing on a variety of soils in Acacia, Acacia-Terminalia, Acacia-Balanites and Boswellia woodlands and bushlands and in dry riverine forest and thicket. It is common in Eritrea, for example around Gheleb, Mutsab, Nefasit and in the Anseba valley, 1,000-1,500 m.
- Uses:** **Firewood, charcoal,** timber (local construction), medicine (roots, leaves), bee forage, shade, river-bank stabilization, **live fence, fence** (dead branches).
- Description:** A shrub or tree to 8 m, sometimes scrambling over other plants, armed with **strong thorns**, paired with one straight to 2 cm long, one smaller recurved spine ("thumb pointer"). The leaves are arising between the two pair of thorns. **BARK:** Grey, only smooth when young, then reticulately fissured. **LEAVES:** **Thin, hairless and shiny, a similar green both sides,** 3-6 cm long, the edge with **regular rounded teeth** to a pointed tip, the **base rounded, often very unequal,** 3 main veins clear below, vein network raised above. **FLOWERS:** Very small, yellowish, crowded in heads about 1.5 cm across. **FRUIT: Rounded to 2 cm** across, the skin **dark red-brown** when ripe, in stalked bunches, **very acid pulp** around the stone, hardly edible.
- Propagation:** Seedlings, cuttings.
- Seed:** A prolific seeder but low germination rate; no. of seeds per kg: 500-1,500.
- treatment:** Soak in cold water for 24 hours before sowing or crack seed coat.
- storage:** Can be stored up to a year if kept cool and dry.
- Management:** Pollarding, lopping, coppicing, pruning.
- Remarks:** The yellow-pink wood is tough and bends well and although it is termite-resistant it is not very durable in the ground. A very important tree because of its many uses, but becoming increasingly rare.

